



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

**GOV. MALLOY: IT'S TIME FOR THE STATE TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO
ADDRESS GENDER WAGE DISPARITY**

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Daniel P. Malloy today announced that the Connecticut Department of Labor, led by Commissioner Sharon Palmer, and the Department of Economic and Community Development, led by Commissioner Catherine Smith, will study the factors that contribute to the gender wage gap in Connecticut's workforce and make recommendations for actions that will eliminate that inequity.

"While gender wage disparity impacts women first and foremost, the ramifications can affect entire families," said Governor Malloy. "In many families, women are the breadwinners. In others, they are the only source of income. The disparity in Connecticut is unacceptably high, and while this is a complicated issue, that cannot be an excuse for inaction. It's time for our state to find ways to address gender wage disparity."

"A lifetime of earning less pay not only means a smaller paycheck, but also means a retirement with less security for a woman and her family," Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman said. "That is a fundamental economic disadvantage that is clearly unfair and needs to be dealt with so women can better support their families today and retire on equal footing with men."

According to a study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, the weekly earnings of female full-time wage and salary workers compared to those of their male colleagues were 81% nationally and only 75.8% in Connecticut. While attempts are frequently made to explain away the gender gap based on factors such as choice of occupation, industry, experience or education, studies that control for these measures estimate that discrimination is responsible for about 40% of the disparity.

"Regardless of gender, every worker should be paid equally for equal work," Commissioner Palmer noted. "Women comprise 47% of the workforce in Connecticut, which means nearly half of our workers may be experiencing discrimination when it comes to earning a fair paycheck. This is an issue that deserves our attention because closing the pay gap and raising women's wages will certainly improve the quality of life

for many of our citizens that work hard every day to ensure economic security for their families.”

“As a woman who has worked the majority my career in the private sector, and now the public sector, I have a unique vantage point in looking into this important issue,” Commissioner Smith said. “Economic opportunities should be open and equal to all Connecticut residents. The wage disparity in our state based on gender is troubling and warrants a closer examination into the factors driving our poor performance. I look forward to working with Commissioner Palmer on this issue and coming up with achievable, common sense solutions that will close the gap in the near term.”

In 2009, Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act to loosen the period of limitations for when an individual can bring a discrimination lawsuit. Previously, an individual had to file a federal claim of discriminatory pay within 180 days of the discriminatory act that resulted in unequal pay. Now, an individual has 180 days from receipt of any paycheck that reflects a past act of discrimination to file a federal claim, regardless of when the unequal treatment first began. Connecticut law already recognizes ongoing pay discrimination based on a past act.

The Governor has asked the commissioners to make recommendations to address the gender wage gap by October 2013.

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For Immediate Release: January 24, 2013

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